

MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, B.A. (LIBERAL ARTS)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park, World Campus

Program Description

Multidisciplinary Studies is a multi-disciplinary, theme-oriented, and student-designed major leading to a bachelor of arts degree. The major consists of 36 credits, divided into two sections. The core (12 credits) consists of 3 credits each in the following: research methods/projects; communication skills; theory/application; and critical analysis. The additional courses (24 credits) consist of courses directed toward the student's theme, 15 credits of which must be at the 400 level.

Early Admission Program for Professional Schools

If a student is accepted and enrolled as a degree candidate in a professional postgraduate degree program requiring three years or more to complete (such as medical school, dental school, law school, theological seminary, etc.) and if that student completes 94 undergraduate credits at Penn State including General Education, B.A. requirements, and the Multidisciplinary Studies 12-credit core requirements, that student may use up to 30 credits from the professional school to complete the B.A. Multidisciplinary Studies.

It must be emphasized that only top students are accepted into professional school programs on such an early admission basis and that not every professional school has such a policy. Students must have enrolled in Multidisciplinary Studies prior to attending the professional school to request graduation in Multidisciplinary Studies.

What is Multidisciplinary Studies?

You can customize a Bachelor's Degree in Multidisciplinary Studies to fit your area of interest. The 120-credit program allows you to focus on developing your skills in communication and analysis along with your leadership abilities. You will work closely with your adviser to design a program that creates intellectual depth in an area of study that is unique to your interests, but also aligns with the theoretical foundation of a liberal arts degree. The goal of the Bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies is to provide a broad education that introduces methods of analysis used in the liberal arts disciplines. In addition, it can also prepare you to address the complex social, cultural, ethical, and organizational issues you may face in leadership positions.

You Might Like This Program If...

You have not earned an undergraduate degree, you wish to complete a degree or you wish to customize a degree to fit your career goals.

Entrance To Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to the major, the student must submit a proposal. In consultation with a Multidisciplinary Studies adviser, the student formulates a proposal designing a program that investigates a theme from the viewpoint of at least three different subject areas. Students may not duplicate existing majors from any academic area. An important standard for entrance to the Multidisciplinary Studies major is the student's ability to design a program with academic integrity worthy of a bachelor of arts degree.

World Campus

Direct Admission to the Major

Incoming first-year students who meet the program admission requirements are admitted directly into the major. Admission restrictions may apply for change-of-major and/or change-of-campus students.

For more information about the admission process for this major, please send a request to the college, campus, or program contact (listed in the Contact tab).

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Multidisciplinary Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

| Requirement | Credits |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| General Education | 45 |
| Electives | 15 |
| Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements | 24 |
| Requirements for the Major | 36 |

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

Courses must be selected in consultation with an adviser.

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

| Code | Title | Credits |
|--|-------|---------|
| Additional Courses | | |
| <i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i> | | |
| Select 24 credits from University-wide offerings to include: | | 24 |
| 12 credits at the 400 level representing at least three different subject areas | | |
| 3 credit 400-level capstone course | | |
| A minimum 9 credits from the humanities and social sciences | | |
| Supporting Courses and Related Areas | | |
| <i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i> | | |
| Select 3 credits in research methods/projects from courses that involve research methodology or that focus on a research project | | 3 |
| Select 3 credits in communication skills from courses that focus on expression including those in verbal, symbolic, and written skills | | 3 |
| Select 3 credits in theory/application from courses that focus on theory, principle, central concepts, or fundamental issues | | 3 |

Select 3 credits in critical analysis from courses that focus on evaluation, synthesis, and analysis

3

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- **Communication:** Students will be able to effectively communicate about the letters, arts and sciences in both written and oral formats.
- **Knowledge:** Students will be able to integrate knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines into a degree program that reflects their theme.
- **Professional Identity:** Students will be able to synthesize multiple disciplinary perspectives into an intellectual or professional identity.
- **Research:** Students will be able to conduct research and apply empirical or creative process specific to their fields of specialization.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of

both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

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World Campus

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advising@outreach.psu.edu

SUGGESTED ACADEMIC PLAN

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Multidisciplinary Studies, B.A. at University Park Campus and World Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|---|---|-----------|
| ENGL 15, 30H, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H [‡] | 3 CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T [‡] | 3 |
| Foreign Language (Level 1) | 4 General Education Quantification Course (GQ) [‡] | 3 |
| General Education Quantification (GQ) [‡] | 3 Foreign Language (Level 2) | 4 |
| General Education Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| First-Year Seminar | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| | 16 | 16 |

Second Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Core course for major [*] | 3 Major Core Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| BA Other Cultures Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| World Language (Level 3) | 4 General Education Course | 3 |
| Elective | 3 BA Knowledge Domains Course | 3 |
| | 16 | 15 |

Third Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Major Core Course [*] | 3 Major Core Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| General Education Course | 3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡] | 3 |
| BA Knowledge Domains Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| Elective course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| | 15 | 15 |

Fourth Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|---|---|-------------|
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Capstone Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| BA Knowledge Domain Course | 3 General Education Health and Wellness (GHW) | 1.5 |
| Elective | 3 Elective | 3 |
| General Education Health and Wellness (GHW) | 1.5 Elective | 3 |
| | 13.5 | 13.5 |

Total Credits 120

[†] Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Note:

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

^{*} Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

[‡] Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

[#] Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

Multidisciplinary Studies, B.A. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|---|---|-----------|
| ENGL 15, 30H, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H [‡] | 3 CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T [‡] | 3 |
| Foreign Language (Level 1) | 4 General Education Quantification Course (GQ) [‡] | 3 |
| General Education Quantification (GQ) [‡] | 3 Foreign Language (Level 2) | 4 |
| General Education Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| First-Year Seminar | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| | 16 | 16 |

Second Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Core course for major [*] | 3 Major Core Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| BA Other Cultures Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| World Language (Level 3) | 4 General Education Course | 3 |
| Elective | 3 BA Knowledge Domains Course | 3 |
| | 16 | 15 |

Third Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Major Core Course [*] | 3 Major Core Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| General Education Course | 3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡] | 3 |
| BA Knowledge Domains Course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| Elective course | 3 General Education Course | 3 |
| | 15 | 15 |

Fourth Year

| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
|---|---|-------------|
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Capstone Course [*] | 3 |
| Major Option Course [*] | 3 Major Option Course [*] | 3 |
| BA Knowledge Domain Course | 3 General Education Health and Wellness (GHW) | 1.5 |
| Elective | 3 Elective | 3 |
| General Education Health and Wellness (GHW) | 1.5 Elective | 3 |
| | 13.5 | 13.5 |

Total Credits 120

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Note:

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

Career Paths

- Government agencies
- For-profit organizations
- Non-profit organizations
- Education
- Health care
- Business
- Human resources

Contact

University Park

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<https://la.psu.edu/future-students/academics/degrees/multidisciplinary-studies/>

World Campus

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<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-multidisciplinary-studies-bachelor-of-arts-degree> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-multidisciplinary-studies-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)

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<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/multidisciplinary-studies> (<https://www.abington.psu.edu/academics/majors-at-abington/multidisciplinary-studies/>)

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<https://montalto.psu.edu/academics/bachelors/letters-arts-sciences-degree> (<https://montalto.psu.edu/academics/bachelors/letters-arts-sciences-degree/>)

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<https://scranton.psu.edu/academics/degrees/bachelors/multidisciplinary-studies> (<https://scranton.psu.edu/academics/degrees/bachelors/multidisciplinary-studies/>)

Shenango

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